

# The Program

NEWSLETTER FOR THE MASTER'S PROGRAM IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND STUDENT AFFAIRS

Volume 2, Issue 1

Spring 2005

## In this issue:

- ✦ Interview Days 2005
- ✦ UCSAA Update
- ✦ Welcome Dr. Sue A. Saunders
- ✦ Assessment Update
- ✦ Brown Bag Series
- ✦ You think you know everything?
- ✦ Graduate Profiles
- ✦ Presentations/  
Publications/  
Congratulations



*1st Year Student Courtney Bazan*

## HESA Interview Days 2005



Interview Days for the 2005-2006 cohort candidates were held March 3<sup>rd</sup> through March 4<sup>th</sup>. Thirty-three candidates representing 20 different states were on hand to interview for the 16 available graduate assistantships. These 33 candidates were selected from more than 130 applicants. Interest in the HESA program is substantial, with an 85% increase in applications this year. Candidates arrived Thursday for a late afternoon welcome program that had HESA faculty introducing the program and sharing their respective backgrounds. A student panel followed with current students answering questions from the HESA candidates. The evening ended with a dinner social at the newly opened Chuck and Augie's restaurant, located in the recently renovated Student Union. Hor d'overs and beverages were

# UCSAA Update

## *Fall 2004*



served throughout the evening as the candidates had an opportunity to socialize with the current HESA students.

Representatives from the Department of Campus Activities, Residential Life, Office of Special Programs, First Year Programs, and many other departments held interviews Friday from 8:30 A.M. to 3:30 P.M. A new element that was added to the interview days this year was a faculty interview which every candidate participated. All HESA faculty members had the opportunity to interview the candidates to assess their academic potential.

Thanks to the cooperation of the faculty, assistantship site supervisors, and the current HESA students, the interview days were a resounding success.



*Dinner at Chuck & Augie's*

Last semester was a great one for the University of Connecticut Student Affairs Association! We had the chance to get off the ground, and we hit the ground running. For the first year, the University of Connecticut was selected as one of ten teams to participate in the Master's Case Study Competition to be held at the NASPA National Conference in March. Congratulations to Gudrun Haider and David Daniels, Jr. who represented HESA in the competition!!

In December, UCSAA members volunteered at the Midnight Breakfast. Under the supervision of fellow HESA and UCSAA member, Amber Ulmer, the members had an opportunity to socialize with undergraduate and graduate students who were preparing for exams, by serving up some hot breakfast items.

Finally, the official UCSAA constitution has been approved! Thanks to everyone in UCSAA who contributed to its inception. With the constitution in place, we will have the opportunity to offer more exciting programs in the new semester!

Jennifer Williams  
UCSAA President, Fall 2004

---

## *Spring 2005*

What a great semester for the UConn Student Affairs Association! With a firm foundation set by our previous UCSAA members, we were able to move ahead with some exciting initiatives. One of the biggest is a Wine & Cheese Reception for the HESA Class of 2005. We are finally in the process for getting a budget from the Graduate Student Senate so that next year UCSAA will really take off. The

format of our meetings has changed as well. UCSAA will host one brown lunch each month in the place of a second regular meeting. It has been an exciting time to be an UCSAA member, and we all look forward to the bright future of this organization!

Amber Ulmer  
UCSAA President, Spring 2005

---

**Greetings from the new  
HESA Program  
Coordinator,  
Sue A. Saunders, Ph.D.**



Coming to Connecticut to coordinate the Higher Education and Student Affairs program has reminded me that life often surprises us with amazing opportunities. This chance to move into a leadership position with colleagues so committed to integrating theory with practical application is rarely found in the world of graduate preparation programs. And the prospect of enhancing a program with a long history of contributing to the foundation literature of student affairs literature was simply impossible to resist.

I first learned about the University of Connecticut higher education and student affairs preparation program during my doctoral student days in the late 1970s.

My major professor eloquently described the work of the then-leader of the UConn program, Dr. Burns Crookston. I learned many years ago that Dr. Crookston shaped our notions of student development and thus, the evolution of our profession. Dr. Crookston's pioneering work to create "intentional democratic communities" and to engage in "milieu management" were the conceptual ancestors of our current emphases on learning communities and educationally purposeful environments.

My own career since those student days of learning about Crookston and other early thinkers in our profession has been a patchwork of interesting and disparate opportunities. I've been a chief student affairs officer at a small, private college; a Dean of Students at a small public university; an executive assistant to a university president; a faculty member and coordinator of a master's program; a counselor; an advisor to the Greek system; and, yes, even a residence hall coordinator. Through those many positions I've learned the value of adaptability, of listening carefully to ways students understand what they experience, and of helping students strike a balance of challenge and support in their academic and co-curricular lives.

I've gratefully accepted opportunities through publications and conference presentations to share my perspectives with communities of professionals outside my home institution. My research has a utilitarian focus. My interests emphasize questions like... How can we better understand and improve staff supervision so that young professionals will stay in student affairs? What is the effect of the fact that relatively few practitioners contribute to the scholarship of our profession? How might we structure practical experiences in graduate

programs so that students are prepared to function excellently in an increasingly complex, conflicted, and sometimes crazy student affairs world?

Because of these varied experiences and my search to better understand our profession, I am prepared to contribute to what is already a distinctive graduate student affairs preparation program at UConn. In my opinion, our program is pioneering a new and better way to educate student affairs professionals for this complex century. Here is just some of the evidence for that bold assertion:

- Dr. Sandy Bell, Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership, has carefully created a two-semester experience in which students not only learn about assessment but complete a publishable assessment project which will provide needed information to a current UConn student affairs office.
- Dr. Julie Bell-Elkins, Interim Dean of Students, is teaching a course that challenges students to explore social justice in a multicultural world.
- Dr. Sam Miller, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs & Co-Director of the HESA Program, is using film as a means to help students understand the history, values, and culture of student affairs.
- Dr. John Saddleire, Vice President for Student Affairs & Co-Director of the HESA Program, not only teaches the capstone course, but along with Dr. Sam Miller has enabled all students in the program to have meaningful

graduate assistantships in offices at UConn.

- Dr. Cynthia Jones, Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs; Dr. Jennifer Lease-Butts, Associate Director of the Honors Program; and Dr. John Sears, Coordinator of Academic and Special Interest Housing all teach regularly in the program, bringing practitioner perspectives to courses that emphasize theory .

Needless to say I'm excited about the opportunities the University of Connecticut provides. We have a powerful past to build upon. I encourage you to bookmark the HESA website [www.hesa.uconn.edu](http://www.hesa.uconn.edu). Please see what we are up to and, more importantly, let us know your thoughts and suggestions for improving our program. Simply e-mail me at [sue.saunders@uconn.edu](mailto:sue.saunders@uconn.edu).



*1st year HESA students at a ropes course*

---

## HESA Assessment Activities

The class of 2006 is nearing the end of a two-semester sequence in assessment, evaluation, and research in Student Affairs. Four teams of students have designed and nearly completed an assessment of a genuine concern or

question related to Student Affairs administration at the University of Connecticut. Each team has a project sponsor; an administrator who has provided guidance and resources to help ensure that the project will support the needs and interests of the Division and ultimately enhance the experience of students UConn. Below is a brief description of each project. Any team member would be happy to give you more details!

✚ *Perceptions of Alcohol Usage & the Spring Weekend Phenomenon: A Study of First-Year Students and Seniors at the University of Connecticut*

**Team members:** Jeffrey Alton, Sarah Clegg, Melissa Berkey, & Amber Ulmer

**Project Sponsor:** Tom Szigethy, Director of the Office of Alcohol and Other Drug Education and Services

The objective of this qualitative study is to gain a better understanding of the perceptions of first-year and senior students regarding alcohol usage, in general, and the Spring Weekend phenomenon, in particular, and how the perceptions and reported drinking behaviors may change between the first and last undergraduate years. Data from the focus groups will complement the efforts underway at the Office of Alcohol and Other Drugs to quantify student drinking behaviors.

✚ *An Assessment of Student Involvement at the University of Connecticut*

**Team members:** Bry Anderson, Emily Comstock, Allison Foster, & Tim Stumph  
**Project Sponsors:** Joe Briody, Associate Director of Student Development and

**Learning & Eddie Daniels, Department Head- both of the Department of Campus Activities**

This survey study is designed to identify the nature and extent of undergraduate student involvement in campus activities and organizations, as well as students' motivations for initial and continued involvement. Data collection methods are designed to represent a wide cross-section of students.

✚ *An assessment of students' perceptions of the judicial process within the Dean of Students Office at the University of Connecticut*

**Team members:** Chad Austein, Courtney Bazan, David Daniels, & Victoria Farris  
**Project sponsor:** Dr. Julie Bell-Elkins, Interim Dean of Students in the Dean of Students Office

This study uses an online survey to describe the perceptions of students who have been adjudicated through the Dean of Students Office of the judicial process, particularly regarding information received, fairness, and impact in their learning and subsequent behaviors. Follow-up focus groups will enable a deeper understanding of these students' perspectives.

✚ *First Year Learning Communities at the University of Connecticut: An Assessment of Student Outcomes and Perceptions*

**Team members:** José Barzola, Gudrun Haider, Kellie Kirby, & Amanda Testo  
**Project sponsor:** John Sears, Coordinator for Academic Programs in the Department of Residential Life

The purpose of this survey study is to better understand the experiences of

students who reside in First Year Learning Communities. The results will help reveal the possible impact learning communities have on students' development, academic performance, interactions with faculty and staff, and adjustment to college life.

---

## Brown Bag Lunch Series



This year, the Brown Bag Lunch series has featured many different and unique presentations aimed at advancing the HESA program developmentally and professionally. Dr. Julie Bell-Elkins, Interim

Dean of Students and HESA faculty member hosted a presentation on the ins and outs of professional associations and how to be successful at the national level. Dr. Sam Miller, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and HESA faculty member hosted a lunch on the practicum experience. Dr. Sue A. Saunders, program coordinator for the HESA program had a “get to know me” lunch.

The Brown Bag Lunch Series will continue in the fall and we are eagerly looking for new topics for programs. Please let us know what you want to have!!

---

## You think you know everything?

Here is a timeline of things to consider when you are in graduate school. Thanks to the Department of Career Services for providing this!

### *First Semester:*

- ✚ Get to know as many people on campus as you can in order to increase your network.
- ✚ Begin to identify organizations that are of interest for a practicum that will assist you in your ultimate career goal.
- ✚ Begin to construct and update your résumé.
- ✚ Make the most of your assistantship! Initiate projects and services that are of interest to you *and* your career.
- ✚ If you have not done so already, join professional associations.

### *Second Semester:*

- ✚ Attend a professional conference to network and volunteer at placement.

### *Third Semester:*

- ✚ Revise your résumé and have it critiqued in Career Services.
- ✚ Now that you have made contacts around campus and in professional organizations, use them! Let everyone you are acquainted with know that you are conducting a job search.
- ✚ Begin to identify resources, like The Chronicle of Higher Education, Academic360, NASPA, ACPA, and HigherEdJobs.com that post employment opportunities.

### *Fourth Semester:*

- ✚ Your job search should be in full swing! Apply to as many jobs as you can!
- ✚ Polish your interview skills by conducting a mock interview at Career Services.
- ✚ Attend a professional conference and participate in placement.



## Meet the Graduates!

This year, we anticipate graduating 13 from the HESA program. These soon-to-be Student Affairs professionals are in the thick of the job search process and are eagerly awaiting job offers and placement opportunities.

### **Kristian Olsen**

**Hometown:** Cedar City, UT

**Undergraduate Institution:** Southern Utah, B.A. Business Management

**Current Employment:** Coordinator of Student Activities, UConn Stamford

One of the great experiences of my life was the opportunity I had to serve the Student Body President at Southern Utah University [SUU]. It was amazing to work with the students, administrators, community, politicians, and other student leaders from around the state. It was this experience that helped me to know what I wanted to do and become. It helped me to know of the importance of a good advisor and the impact that a great Student Life Department can have on students and the university community in general. The HESA program at UConn has helped me develop and hone the skills that will help me to be the kind of administrator that makes a difference in the lives of the students and those with whom I will work with. Thanks to all my great professors for helping me to find that greatness that lies inside. Margaret Mead once said something that is very applicable to those of us in the Student Affairs Field, "*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.*"

### **Sarah Niles**

**Hometown:** Clinton, CT

**Undergraduate Institution:** University of Connecticut, B.A. Communication Sciences & Sociology

**Graduate Assistantship:** Center for Student Involvement - Student Organization and Leadership Support

After six great years at UConn, I am very excited to move on to the new challenges that lay ahead. My interests are in the academic advising field, especially at the undergraduate and entry level. I am passionate about helping students grow academically, socially and emotionally. I enjoy providing students with the tools to make informed decisions about their interests. I am looking to relocating to the Boston area and experience life in the city.

### **Asheanti Dunn**

**Hometown:** New London, CT

**Undergraduate:** Eastern Connecticut State University, B.A Sociology, Minor, Business Administration

**Graduate Assistantship:** Graduate Hall Director

I was first introduced to student affairs, as an undergraduate at Eastern Connecticut State University where I worked in Academic Advisement. I enjoyed having an impact on student's personal, professional, and academic development. It was then that I decided that I wanted to pursue a career in student affairs. I've always known that I wanted to be in a field, which would afford me the opportunity to have a positive influence on the lives of individuals. Thus, I anticipate the challenges ahead, the educational experiences that I will obtain, as well as the people that I will meet as a journey

up the ladder to eventually becoming a Dean, or Vice President of Student Affairs.

## Christine Morello

**Hometown:** Hamden, CT

**Undergraduate Institution:** University of Connecticut, B.A. Communication

**Sciences/ Communication Disorders**

**Current Employment:** Assistant Director, Center for Students with Disabilities

I was actually ready to start my graduate work in Audiology and it hit me that this was not where I wanted to be. I started to think about what I really wanted to do and all I kept coming back to was how college really was the time of my life (oh the cliché's) and I loved being in the collegiate atmosphere. I started doing some research and was a bit dumbfounded that I actually could get a degree to become a college administrator (and then I would never, ever have to leave college). Working full-time while attending classes has been really challenging but also very rewarding because I am always able to tie my coursework in to the work I do daily with my students. This program has been really fulfilling and I have met some great people, with all kinds of experiences, and who all have different views on issues relevant to student affairs. I love the energy the students bring to campus each semester and I feel very lucky to be able to give back to the student population the support and knowledge I received from administrators when I was a freshman.



*High Wire at the Ropes Course*

## Jennifer Williams

**Hometown:** Madison, CT

**Undergraduate Institution:**

University of Connecticut,

B.A. Psychology

**Graduate Assistantship:** Career Services

The Higher Education and Student Affairs (HESA) program has been a great experience. From meeting other professionals to learning the fundamentals of college student development, I feel prepared for the Student Affairs field. I have been able to get in depth perspectives from my practicum experiences within the Department of Career Services at Eastern Connecticut State University and the Individualized Major office here at UConn. Even though I am a huge Husky fan (I won the Husky Pride Award!), I look forward to experiences at other colleges and universities!

## Carlos Monteiro

**Hometown:** Boston, MA

**Undergraduate Institution:** Westfield State College, B.S. Criminal Justice

**Graduate Assistantship:** Office of Multicultural and International Affairs

My Master of Arts degree in Higher Education Administration provided meaningful experiences that bolstered my interest in working with students. Through coursework, internships, assistantships, and conferences, I have gained expansive knowledge that has prepared me to be both a professional, and a researcher in the field. My experiences at UConn have left me eager to meet greater intellectual challenges.

# Kara Acken

Hometown: Dover Plains, NY

Undergraduate Institution: Western New England College, B.A. Mathematics, Minor, Psychology

Graduate Assistantship: Graduate Hall Director

Throughout life we all have the opportunity to explore new horizons. In the course of studying student affairs, I did just that. I first grew passionate for the field through my undergraduate involvements in Orientation and athletics. From those experiences it became clear to me where I belonged. Since then, I have continued to experience a fulfilling journey of living, learning, and leadership in student affairs. The University of Connecticut has provided me with wonderful opportunities, and my involvements in residential life, athletics, and campus activities have all been educationally and personally rewarding. Now, with graduation in sight, I look forward to obtaining a job in the field of student affairs that fits my individual needs and utilizes my strengths. By being a motivational leader and friend, I plan to instill within each student, the confidence and initial drive they personally need to find their purpose, place, and direction in life.

---

## Presentations

✚ National Collegiate Honors Council, November 2004

*“Students as Teachers: Leadership Development of Honors Students”*

Presenter: Jennifer Lease-Butts

✚ National Collegiate Honors Council, November 2004

*“Bridging Campus Culture: Honors Programs and Student Affairs”*

Presenter: Jennifer Lease-Butts

✚ Northeast Affiliate of College and University and Residence Halls, November 2004

*“Programming for the 21st century: Tools of the Trade”*

Presenter: Gudrun Haider

✚ Northeast Affiliate of College and University and Residence Halls, November 2004

*“Surviving the Ice-Breaking Challenge”*

Presenter: Gudrun Haider

✚ Northeast Affiliate of College and University and Residence Halls, November 2004

*“Jobs in Student Affairs”*

Presenter: Gudrun Haider

✚ All of the Above Conference, February 2005

*“Everything I Wish I Had Known About Grad School”*

Presenters:  
Courtney Bazan  
Victoria Farris

✚ American College Personnel Association, April 2005

*“The Reluctant Judicial Officer”*

Presenters:  
Karen Bresciano  
Michael Ferrara  
Amber Ulmer

*“Supervising New Professionals”*

Presenter: Sue A. Saunders

*“The Effect of Practice on Student Affairs Scholarship”*

Presenter: Sue A. Saunders

*“The Senior Student Affairs Officer: Satiating or Satisfaction”*

Presenter: Sue A. Saunders

*“Implementation of BASICS on a Large Public University Campus”*

Presenters:  
Julie Bell-Elkins  
John Saddlemire  
Tom Szigethy  
Amber Ulmer

*“Catering Alcohol and Other Drug Intervention Systems for Students”*

Presenters:  
Julie Bell-Elkins  
John Saddlemire  
Tom Szigethy  
Amber Ulmer

✚ Congratulations to Dr. Marie Saddlemire for a successful defense of her doctoral dissertation, “Faculty Perceptions of Academic Dishonesty.”

✚ Congratulations to Dr. Jennifer Lease-Butts for being selected to be a reviewer for *The College Student Affairs Journal*.

✚ Congratulations to David Daniels, Jr. and Gudrun Haider for participating in the NASPA Master’s Cases Study Competition; the first UConn group in many years!

✚ Congratulations to Gudrun Haider on being nominated for a *Student Life Award* for her involvement in RHA.

✚ John and Marie Saddlemire are expecting their 2<sup>nd</sup> child in early June... congratulations!!!



*Makeshift Camp for UConn Basketball Tickets*

---

## Congratulations!!

✚ Congratulations to Dr. Jennifer Lease-Butts on her November wedding!

✚ Congratulations to first year student Timothy Stumph on his April Wedding!